



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Bureau of the Census
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MEMORANDUM FOR Distribution

From: Cynthia Clark
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Subject: Evaluation of the Simplified Enumerator Questionnaire- ICM
Comparison

I am pleased to present the executive summary of one of the evaluation studies for the Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal. The dress rehearsal was conducted in three sites — Columbia, South Carolina; Menominee County, Wisconsin; and Sacramento, California. The evaluation studies cover detailed aspects of eight broad areas related to the census dress rehearsal — census questionnaire, address list, coverage measurement, coverage improvement, promotion activities, procedures addressing multiple options for census reporting, field operations, and technology.

The executive summary for each evaluation study is also available on the Census Bureau Internet site (<http://www.census.gov/census2000> and click on the link to "Evaluation"). Copies of the complete report may be obtained by contacting Carnelle Sligh at (301) 457-3525 or by e-mail at carnelle.e.sligh@ccmail.census.gov. Please note that the complete copy of the following reports will not be publically released: reports regarding procedures addressing multiple options for census reporting and the Evaluation of Housing Unit Coverage on the Master Address File.

The evaluations are distributed broadly to promote the open and thorough review of census processes and procedures. The primary purpose of the dress rehearsal is to simulate portions of the environment we anticipate for Census 2000, so we can identify and correct potential problems in the processes. Thus, the purpose of the evaluation studies is to provide analysis to support time critical review and possible refinements of Census 2000 operations and procedures.

The analysis and recommendations in the evaluation study reports are those of staff working on specific evaluations and, thus, do not represent the official position of the Census Bureau. They represent the results of an evaluation of a component of the census plan. They will be used to analyze and improve processes and procedures for Census 2000. The individual evaluation recommendations have not all yet been reviewed for incorporation in the official plan for Census 2000. These evaluation study reports will be used as input to the decision making process to refine the plans for Census 2000.

The Census Bureau will issue a report that synthesizes the recommendations from all the evaluation studies and provides the Census Bureau review of the dress rehearsal operation. This report will also indicate the Census Bureau's official position on the utilization of these results in the Census 2000 operation. This report will be available July 30th.

Evaluation of the Simplified Enumerator Questionnaire- ICM Comparison

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Simplified Enumerator Questionnaire (SEQ) is an enumerator-administered paper questionnaire used to collect information from households that do not respond by mail. The Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal SEQ forms are designed to accommodate five or fewer people. For households with more than five household members, enumerators must continue the enumeration on another form. For the short form, a continuation sheet has been designed to accommodate this process, yet there is no continuation sheet for the long form SEQ. The procedures for completing the SEQ form for large households are complicated. Both form types require enumerators to move between two or more forms to take the roster and administer the topic-based, 100 percent items.

Enumerators are instructed to complete the entire household roster before asking the 100 percent questions. Yet, results from related evaluations (see A3a, A3b) suggest that enumerators often administer the SEQ in a person-based format. Thus, we suspect that they may collect all of the data on the first five household members before taking the names of any other persons in the household. Once respondents know that there are a number of questions to answer for each person listed on the roster, they may be reluctant to provide the names of additional household members.

This evaluation assesses the extent to which the number of persons in large households (greater than five) may be under-reported on the SEQ short and long forms. The analysis was conducted by comparing Nonresponse Followup (NRFU) roster counts (obtained from the SEQ) to Integrated Coverage Measurement/Post Enumeration Survey (ICM/PES) population counts. The ICM/PES provides a source for comparison because it re-rosters a sample of Dress Rehearsal households using a Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) instrument.

Results indicate that households enumerated with five people on the SEQ had a significant occurrence of cases where ICM/PES enumerated more than five for the same household. In South Carolina and Sacramento, SEQ households that rostered four or six persons tended to have fewer occurrences of ICM/PES population count discrepancies when compared to five person households. Thus, population count differences for NRFU households of size five may, in fact, be an artifact of the format of the paper instrument. We hypothesize that, in some instances, enumerators are collecting all of the data on the first five household members before attempting to take the names of any other persons in the household. Respondents may be reluctant to provide the names of additional household members.

It is recommended that households of size five be included in the criteria for the Census 2000 quality assurance program for Nonresponse Followup. This program includes a roster accuracy check by conducting a reinterview with selected households.